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Forces Wary as Congress on Intelligence Activities

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WASHINGTON, April 20 — In hearings beginning this week, the subcommittee on security and terrorism of the Senate Judiciary Committee will seek to publicize theories that the Soviet Union supports and directs an integrated network of terrorist organizations and has shaped Western public opinion to its advantage through a large-scale "disinformation" campaign, according to a subcommittee official.

Joel S. Lisker, the chief counsel of the new subcommittee, said in a recent interview that "we will do everything we can to modify and eliminate" the guidelines imposed in 1975 to restrict infiltration and surveillance of domestic groups of political dissidents.

Republican subcommittee members have also suggested that they will strongly urge the Reagan Administration to remove many of the restraints on intelligence agencies. In the view of some conservatives, this would permit a revitalized and newly motivated corps of Government investigators to gather evidence on a security problem that they believe has been unwisely discounted in recent years.

As a result, liberals in and out of Congress have begun to express fear that the Republican-controlled subcommittee is a manifestation of a larger effort to re-create an internal security mandate that was largely dropped in the middle and late 1970's.

"We are increasingly concerned about the direction of the subcommittee," said Jerry Berman, the legislative counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union. "We are not sure that some of the subcommittee may not wish to brand those who disagree with government policy as terrorists, foreign agents or Communist dupes. That is McCarthyism and we oppose it."

Representative Don Edwards of California, a liberal Democrat who is chairman of the House subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights, has expressed alarm that "momentum appears to be on the side of those who savor the bad old days."

As yet, momentum of any kind is hard to detect. Instead, there seems to be cautious circling by contending forces.

At the first meeting of the security subcommittee, its chairman, Senator Jeremiah Denton, Republican of Alabama, moved to reassure liberals alarmed by its creation. The retired admiral and naval aviator, who was a prisoner of war in

Vietnam for seven years, said that his intention "to ensure the protection of our basic constitutional rights to all citizens." In an interview, he repeatedly stressed that he had no intention of permitting the subcommittee to be used for political witch hunting.

Opposes Relaxing of Guidelines

He also said that his present inclination was to believe that the Federal Bureau of Investigation needed more manpower rather than a "relaxation of guidelines" now restricting investigatory abuse.

Two Democratic Senators, Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont and Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, minority members of the subcommittee, said they doubted that Senator Denton intended to employ investigative excesses.

"He has been exceedingly reasonable," said Senator Biden. "Nothing about the guy makes me say, 'Here comes Joe McCarthy.'"

On the other hand, there is strong evidence that three Republicans, Senator John P. East of South Carolina, Senator Orrin G. Hatch of Utah and Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, who is chairman of the Judiciary Committee, all favor urging the executive branch to relax administrative restrictions on the intelligence agencies.

Goals of the Committee

Mr. Lisker said he believed the mission of the subcommittee was "basically to alert, to apprise, to increase awareness by maximizing publicity so that when substantive information comes along about disinformation and terrorism, the public will understand it."

Disinformation is defined by intelligence agency specialists as information intended to mislead recipients to the advantage of the government or intelligence agency that originates it, usually in a clandestine fashion.

One witness at a subcommittee hearing scheduled for Friday will be Arnaud de Borchgrave, a former foreign correspondent for Newsweek and the co-author of "The Spike," a best-selling novel that attributes many Western foreign policy and intelligence failures of the last 20 years to a vast disinformation campaign. Many conservatives regard the novel as veiled nonfiction.

Another witness will be Claire Sterling, a Rome-based journalist who wrote "The Terror Network," which argues that much terrorist activity has enjoyed Soviet support and encouragement. Other witnesses will be William Colby, a former Director of Central Intelligence, and Michael Ledeen, editor of the Washington Quarterly.

ers could have a bearing on the Administration's policy. Moreover, the Administration has already proclaimed combating international terrorism as one of its highest priorities.

Before Mr. Reagan's inauguration, the conservative Heritage Foundation prepared a broad "blueprint" of suggested policies for a conservative government. The intelligence and internal security sections of the Heritage report were edited by Samuel T. Francis, who has since joined the staff of Senator East. Some other staff assistants to Republican members of Congress assisted in writing the report.

Strengthening Intelligence Effort

The Heritage report includes scores of recommendations aimed at building the strongest internal security and counterintelligence apparatus the nation has ever had, with the power to use currently illegal methods such as "surreptitious entries" and mail openings. The report said that current executive orders and F.B.I. "guidelines" imposed by former Attorney General Edward H. Levi should be abolished, with investigations "limited only by the letter of applicable statutes."

The report also called for the appointment of an Attorney General and an F.B.I. director "who understand the nature of the threat and the professional tradecraft of internal security work."

The Heritage paper also recommended that the President use his leadership to develop public support for such a program, saying he should supply "Presidential emphasis on the nature of the threat, repeated speeches on the escalation of Soviet bloc intelligence activities, the nature of the terrorist threat and in its international dimensions and the reality of subversion."

These suggested tactics and policies have not been formally endorsed or repudiated by the Administration. However, some of the proposals were embodied in a draft of a new executive order for the intelligence community. The draft was recently prepared by an interagency committee and disclosed by officials opposed to increased Government surveillance on American citizens. The leak led both senior Central Intelligence Agency and White House officials to discount the draft order.

Senator East, who was described by Senator Biden as "very bright, very ideological, very determined and a man pursuing his destiny," said in an interview that he was sensitive to the need to protect civil liberties but also concerned about the subcommittee being too "naïve" about internal security.

He said his "general feeling" was that present guidelines and executive orders governing the F.B.I. and C.I.A. "are too restrictive and limiting."